

MADISON COUNTY
RETURN TO WORK (RTW) PROGRAM

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Signature

Date

Madison County Commissioner District 1 – David Schulz

Madison County Commissioner District 2 – Dan Happel

Madison County Commissioner District 3 – James P. Hart, Chair

5/5/14

Attest: Madison County Clerk and Recorder – Peggy Kaatz-Stemler

5/5/14

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RETURN TO WORK (RTW) POLICY STATEMENT:

The Madison County Commissioners believe that the best approach to controlling incidents and cost is to keep injuries and illnesses from occurring. We are committed to utilizing our resources to provide a safe work environment for everyone.

Madison County has developed a plan and process designed to help injured employees receive prompt medical attention and recovery assistance. The plan is called the Return to Work (RTW) injury management plan. It includes a team effort involving the injured worker, the treating health provider, insurance provider and internal county management.

When incidents do occur, it is in everyone's best interest that injuries are properly managed. A Medical Status Form should be sent for completion by the treating provider with the injured employee to help determine medical status and provide a treatment plan. In those cases where the provider does not complete the form, we may send a letter that will be used to inform the provider of our intent to provide temporary transitional duty work for a recovering employee.

County Department Heads and Elected Officials with the support of the RTW Coordinators will make an effort to provide a temporary modified transitional work position until the employee is able to resume normal duties. All modified work assignments are temporary and intended to facilitate a return to regular work duties as soon as it is medically feasible. These positions may be offered at any location or department/shift at any Madison County workplace location.

Our employees are our greatest assets and we are committed to providing prompt, high-quality medical care and returning injured workers to full gainful employment as soon as medically feasible. Studies show that RTW programs help speed the recovery process through maintaining job skills and reducing the impact of work-related injuries on the injured worker's family and income. The Madison County Commissioners believe that this program aids in retaining productive people, minimizes costs, and believe the workers will be better able to return sooner and avoid long term disabilities affecting their careers.

The Madison County Commissioners support the primary objective of this program; to assure effective medical care for any injured employee and to assist with their prompt return to productive work as soon as medically feasible. **Failure to report for work at any of the designated times or places may affect your time loss compensation.** This policy is not intended as a guarantee of continuity of benefits or rights.

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Return to Work has long been known to reduce workers compensation costs, however it has recently been found to also reduce pain and suffering by the employee, speed up healing times and increase the level of healing a person experiences. Because of these benefits, the Madison County Commissioners have chosen to implement this program for the county employees.

If an employee is injured on the job, our first priority is to ensure he/she receives proper medical treatment. It is preferred that an employee fills out a First Report of Injury Form prior to leaving the worksite to seek medical treatment. However, if an employee is seriously injured, working at a location where a First Report is not readily available, or working a shift not within normal county operational hours employees may need to seek medical treatment prior to filling out this form. If this is the case, it is imperative that this form is completed with your Department Head, Elected Official (DH/EO), or designated RTW Coordinators as soon as possible after receiving medical treatment. This form is an employee's application for benefits from our Workers' Compensation Insurance Carrier, and it is required for benefits to be paid.

If an employee is unable to return directly and unrestricted to work duties, a RTW Team (herein referred to as "team") will be established including the DH/EO, and RTW Coordinators. The goals of this team are to find temporary transitional duties, and keep communication open with the employee, medical provider, and insurance carrier to promote return to work success.

In the event the employee does not return immediately to work without restrictions, a Medical Status Form is required to be returned by the injured employee following all medical appointments. This form will help determine the type of work Madison County has available within the restrictions set forth by a physician. Failure to return this form may result in time loss compensation. Upon the return of this form, the DH/EO, designated RTW Coordinators, the employee and any other necessary party will discuss the job tasks available within those restrictions. If an employee can return to work, he/she will be expected to return to work immediately.

If long periods of time occur between each visit to the physician, the team may meet at least every month to review an employee's work restrictions and ensure that only those tasks approved are being done. If an employee is away from work, it is preferred that he/she comes in to attend these meetings if it is possible. If additional tasks are deemed to be within the restrictions set forth in the most recent Medical Status Form, these duties may be added to a temporary job. Once a physician releases an employee back to full duty, he/she is expected to return to the time of injury job.

Open, two way communication is vital to the success of this program. As such, the DH/EO, and designated RTW Coordinators will attempt to contact the employee periodically to keep updated on condition and status. It is also recommended that an employee calls in to the office

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while he/she is away from work. This will help keep those lines of communication open and will enable a speedier return to work.

Training on this program should occur in all departments in the county. New employees will be trained in the program upon hire. Employees are required to attend this training and are required to sign that they have been trained. This will help ensure that all employees have received important information regarding our Return to Work program and understand how this program will be used should an incident occur.

Madison County Commissioners reserve the right to change or modify this program at any time.

RTW Coordinators include: Safety Coordinator, Personnel and Finance Departments

Duties:

- Develop and monitor the Return to Work Program.
- Provide managers/supervisors and employees the resources needed to make the program successful.
- Develop job descriptions with essential functions of the jobs within the organization.
- Require a Medical Status Form upon return from physician visits.
- Review the Medical Status Form upon the employee's return from the physician. It is important to call in the remainder of the team for this review.
- Discuss the expectations with the injured employee.
- Communicate with injured employee frequently. This can be done in person or via phone.
- Attend all return to work team meetings.

In conjunction with the RTW Coordinators

Department Head/Elected Official Responsibilities include:

- Ensure injured employees receive the appropriate medical treatment.
- Assist the injured employee in completing the First Report of Injury Form.
- Discuss the expectations with the injured employee.
- Ensure the injured employee does not work outside the restrictions approved by the physician.
- Require a Medical Status Form upon return from a physician after each visit (forward to RTW Coordinators).
- Attend all return to work team meetings.
- Communicate with injured employee frequently. This can be done in person or via phone.
- If possible, establish temporary jobs within the employee's work areas. These should be written and shared with other departments, Safety Coordinator, and Personnel Department.

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Employee Responsibilities:

- Immediately report all injuries, even minor ones, to your Supervisor.
- It is expected that paperwork is to be filled out by the end of the shift on which the injury occurred, when possible.
- Return completed Medical Status Forms to Supervisor immediately following all doctor appointments.
- Return to work at temporary transitional duty as soon as the physician verifies employee's ability to do so.
- Follow all restrictions. Never work outside those restrictions.
- Communicate any changes in ability to work to one's Supervisor.
- Attend all return to work meetings with the return to work team. If off work, it is strongly advisable that an employee attends these meetings.
- Maintain open communication with your Supervisors and RTW Coordinators. This includes phone calls or visits if an employee is away from the worksite.

Safety Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Develop and monitor a Return to Work Program.
- Train managers/supervisors on the program and how it is to be managed.
- Train employees on the program and how it is to be followed.

It is not the intent of this program to obtain confidential medical information. Information related to the incident, how it happened, who was involved, when it happened and how similar incidents can be prevented in the future will be discussed with the Safety Committee, and management team during the incident investigation. This investigation will not focus on the type of injury or the injured employee's medical diagnosis or prognosis, rather the mechanics of how the injury occurred.

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